

Member Spotlight – Dr. Mark Fabrizi

Our first spotlights featured high school and middle school teachers. We turned our sights to the postsecondary level this time.

The Bio: I've been teaching for 25 years: 18 as a high school English teacher, and 7 at the college level. In 2012, I completed my Ph.D. in Education at the University of Hull in England, and in 2013, I began my second teaching career in higher education. Currently, I am an Associate Professor of Secondary Education in English at Eastern Connecticut State University, where I teach courses in English methods, literacy, writing pedagogy, and classroom management. I am also the Associate Chair of the Education Department, and I coordinate the teaching certification program.

An Influence: One of the biggest influences on my teaching has been Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. His book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explains the value of critical literacy in our society and provides a roadmap for teachers to address issues of social justice, agency, and empowerment in the classroom. It also helps me answer the question my students used to ask me every year: "Why do we have to study English?"

A Go-to Strategy: I structure my units using inquiry-based learning with an interdisciplinary approach, so I find that *anticipation guides* are highly useful in frontloading critical issues and themes. They also provide a useful formative assessment, not to mention helping students reflect on their learning after the conclusion of the unit. They're great to support writing and structured discussions in class as well.



A Favorite Book: Fantasy literature is my favorite genre, and I love Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. I've used the book in three fantasy literature courses I developed, and I find it incredibly rich and versatile, not to mention appealing to most students. It helps to bridge classic literature from *Beowulf*, *The Odyssey*, and Shakespeare to modern texts such as *Harry Potter* and *The Road*. The syntax and diction lend themselves well to rhetorical analysis, the characters are widely varied (though there are few females that occupy significant roles), the plot is dramatic, and the themes are timeless. I find the book endlessly fascinating, and I've read it more than two dozen times. However, at 850,000 words, the full trilogy is a lot to ask, so I've limited myself to the first book, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Something Personal: I enjoy writing poetry, short stories, and novels, not to mention nonfiction articles and book chapters, and I've even co-written a few screenplays. I also love to cook, so when I'm not in the classroom or in my office, you can find me in my kitchen experimenting with new flavors and ingredients.